

**WE CLAIM:**

1. A computer system comprising:

a first device; and

a second device coupled to said first device;

wherein said first device is configured to convey a first request to said second device,

wherein said second device is configured to receive said first request, wherein said second device is configured to detect a temporarily unavailable condition, wherein said second device is configured to convey a response to said first device corresponding to said first request, and wherein said response includes a delay value corresponding to said temporarily unavailable condition.

2. The computer system of claim 1, wherein said first device is configured to receive said response, and wherein said first device is configured to convey a second request to said second device at a time corresponding to said delay value.

3. The computer system of claim 1, wherein said second device is configured to generate said delay value according to a type of said temporarily unavailable condition.

4. The computer system of claim 1, wherein said delay value corresponds to a first value in response to said temporarily unavailable condition corresponding to a first type of condition and wherein said delay value corresponds to a second value in response to said temporarily unavailable condition corresponding to a second type of condition.

5. The computer system of claim 1, wherein said second device is configured to calculate said delay value using one or more variables that correspond to one or more previous temporarily unavailable conditions.

6. The computer system of claim 1, wherein said delay value corresponds to an encoded value.

7. The computer system of claim 1, further comprising:

a policy layer coupled to said first device and said second device, wherein said policy layer is configured to cause an error recovery mechanism to be initiated in response to detecting that a retry limit corresponding to said first request is exceeded, and wherein said error recovery mechanism is configured to perform an action according to said response.

8. A computer system comprising:

a communications medium;

a first device coupled to said communications medium; and

a second device coupled to said communications medium;

wherein said first device is configured to receive a response from said second device indicating that said second device is temporarily unavailable, wherein said response corresponds to a first request conveyed by said first device, wherein said response includes a delay value, and wherein said first device is configured to convey second request corresponding to said first request at a time corresponding to said delay value.

9. The computer system of claim 8, wherein said communications medium comprises a switching network.

10. The computer system of claim 8, wherein said communications medium comprises a shared bus.

11. The computer system of claim 8, wherein said communications medium comprises an arbitrated loop.

12. The computer system of claim 8, wherein said second device is configured to calculate said delay value using one or more variables that correspond to one or more previous temporarily unavailable conditions.

13. The computer system of claim 8, wherein said delay value corresponds to an encoded value.

14. The computer system of claim 8, further comprising:

a policy layer coupled to said communications medium, wherein said policy layer is configured to cause an error recovery mechanism to be initiated in response to detecting that a retry limit corresponding to said second request is exceeded, and wherein said error recovery mechanism is configured to perform an action according to said response.

15. A method comprising:

conveying a first request from a first device to a second device;

detecting a temporarily unavailable condition at said second device;

generating a delay value corresponding to said temporarily unavailable condition; and

5 conveying a response corresponding to said first request to from said second device to  
said first device, wherein said response includes said delay value.

16. The method of claim 15, further comprising:

10 conveying a second request from said first device to said second device at a time  
corresponding to said delay value.

17. The method of claim 15, further comprising:

15 initiating an error recovery mechanism corresponding to said response in response to  
determining that a retry limit corresponding to said first request has been  
exceeded.

18. The method of claim 15, further comprising:

20 encoding said delay value prior to said conveying said response.

19. The method of claim 15, wherein said generating further comprises:

25 determining a type of said temporarily unavailable condition; and

generating said delay value according to said type of said temporarily unavailable  
condition.

20. The method of claim 15, further comprising:

generating said delay value using one or more variables that correspond to one or more previous temporarily unavailable conditions.

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